

NEWS

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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 30, 2006

Brooklyn Woman, Cousin from Providence Admit Conspiracy
to Steal More Than \$1.2 Million from Songwriters Guild

(More)

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NEWARK – A Brooklyn woman pleaded guilty today to conspiring to steal more than \$1.2 Million from the Songwriters Guild of America, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Nicole Williams, 27, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr. to a single-count Information charging her with conspiracy to steal money which had crossed a state boundary after being stolen. The charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Anthony Ray, 33, of Providence, R.I., who is Williams' cousin, pleaded guilty yesterday to the same charge, as well as to tax evasion, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a \$100,000 fine. Judge Greenaway scheduled Williams' sentencing for Dec. 18, and Ray's sentencing for Dec. 11.

From August 2001 through June 2005 Ray received \$802,721 in SGA royalty checks and Williams received \$444,791 in SGA royalty checks, they admitted in court. They also admitted that they were not entitled to the funds, and that they received them from a co-conspirator, SGA's royalty manager, who they identified as a relative.

The investigation as to the SGA royalty manager remains open and active.

The criminal conduct by Williams and Ray occurred at an SGA office in Weehawken, which has since been closed. The SGA has its headquarters relocated to Nashville, Tenn.

The SGA is the nation's oldest and largest organization run exclusively by and for songwriters. The SGA represented approximately 5,000 living songwriters throughout the United States, as well as the estates of deceased SGA members. Among other things, the SGA collects and distributes royalty payments, often in the form of royalty checks that the SGA issues, on behalf of and to many of its songwriter members.

U.S. Attorney Christie credited the FBI in Newark, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Leslie G. Wiser, Postal Inspectors from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Thomas Van de Merlen, Postal Inspector In Charge in Newark, and the Internal Revenue Service in Providence, Rhode Island, for this successful investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam Lurie.

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Defense Counsel:

Williams: Michael Weinstein, Esq., Newark

Ray: Thomas Tarro, III, Providence, R.I.